DESCRIPTION OF COURSE UNIT FOR DOCTORAL STUDIES
AT VILNIUS UNIVERSITY
(Interdisciplinary course)

Scientific Area/eas, Field/ds of Science	Medical and Health Sciences (M 000): Medicine (M 001), Dentistry (M 002), Public Health (M 004) Natural sciences (N 000): Biology (N 010); Ecology and environmental science (N 012) Social sciences (S 000): Sociology (S 005); Psychology (S 006); Education sciences (S 007); Law (S 001) Humanities (H 000): Philosophy (H 001)			
Faculty, Institute, Department/Clinic	Faculty of Medicine, Institute of Health Sciences, Centre for Health Ethics, Law and History			
Course unit title (ECTS credits, hours)	**Bioethics** 8 credits (216 hours)			
Study method	**Lectures**	**Seminars**	**Consultations**	**Self-study**
Number of ECTS credits	0.5	-	0.5	7
Method of the assessment (in 10 point system)	The oral exam. PhD students have to answer 2 questions. Grading scale: 10 (Excellent): Excellent performance, outstanding knowledge and skills 9 (Very good): Strong performance, good knowledge and skills 8 (Good): Above the average performance, knowledge and skills 7 (Highly satisfactory): Average performance, knowledge and skills with unessential shortcomings 6 (Satisfactory): Below average performance, knowledge and skills with substantial shortcomings 5 (Sufficient): Knowledge and skills meet minimum criteria 4, 3, 2, 1 (Insufficient): Knowledge and skills do not meet minimum criteria/below minimum criteria			

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE UNIT

1. To introduce students to different areas of bioethics as well as to opposing interpretations of different bioethical theories.
2. To provide information about the main national and international regulations relevant to different areas of bioethics.
3. To develop an ability to critically evaluate and apply acquired knowledge and to facilitate development of a personal point of view on different bioethical issues.

MAIN TOPICS OF THE COURSE UNIT

1. Bioethics and preconditions of its development. Historical development of the principles of medical ethics: traditional and contemporary paradigm. Interdisciplinarity and methodology of bioethics. Bioethics as an applied and professional ethics: relevance of the normative and descriptive approaches, metaethics. Principlism, casuistry, narrative ethics, feminist theory.

2. Different interpretations of health and disease and their ethical implications. Naturalistic and normative theories of disease and health. The World Health Organization (WHO) definition of health and its critical assessment. Medicalisation and the enhancement of human capacities in the absence of medical indications.

3. Doctrine of informed consent and protection of privacy. Patient as a person and partner in the decision-making process. The patient's right to information and "the right not to know". Involuntary hospitalisation and treatment. Principles of privacy, confidentiality and special cases of their application. Ethical challenges posed by new biomedical technologies: eHealth, Big data, artificial intelligence, mobile applications.

4. Ethical dilemmas at the beginning of human life. Moral status of human embryo. Ethical issues of medically assisted reproduction: gametes and embryo donation, supernumerary embryos. Surrogacy. Ethical issues regarding prenatal diagnosis. Ethical implications of pregnancy termination.

5. Ethical end-of-life decisions. Changing epidemiological features and cultural context of death in the contemporary society. Different medical end-of-life decisions: euthanasia, assisted suicide, overdosing of painkillers, withholding life-prolonging treatment, patient's right to refuse treatment or resuscitation, resuscitation of extremely premature babies.

6. Ethical issues in genetics. Eugenics: historical aspects and ethical assessment. "Reproductive" and "therapeutic" cloning. Genetic ancestry testing, genetic testing for medical and insurance purposes. Direct-to-consumer genetic tests and ethical issues regarding incidental findings. Somatic and germline genome editing.

7. Ethical issues of tissue and organ transplantation. Changing concepts of human death: from traditional definition to the concept of brain death; importance of the shift for the development of organ transplantation policies. Models of expressed and presumed consent for organ and tissue donation. Controversies of organ and tissue commercialization. Protection of donors' and recipients' confidentiality. Justice in allocation of human tissues and organs. Ethical issues regarding non-heart-beating donation.

8. Health-related research involving humans. The origins of biomedical research ethics, historical developments and key international regulations. Distinction between biomedical research, clinical practice and experimental treatment. Different types of research involving humans and their ethical peculiarities. Complexities of implementing ethical principles of human subject research. Ethical approval and monitoring of human subject research.

9. Social justice and health care. Importance of just allocation of healthcare resources in the contemporary society. Different approaches to distributive justice (egalitarianism, libertarianism, utilitarianism, communitarianism) and their application at different organizational levels of healthcare system.

10. Broadening the scope of bioethics: environment, genetically altered plants and animals. Environmental ethics: ethical aspects of climate change and preservation of biodiversity. Animal ethics: animal research, animal cloning and genome editing in wild and farming animals. Genome editing in plants; controversies of genetically modified organism (GMO) definition.

RECOMMENDED LITERATURE SOURCES

1. Chadwick RF. Bioethics, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, (Invalid Date), https://www.britannica.com/topic/bioethics . Accessed 4 April 2022.

2. Flynn J. Theory and Bioethics, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring **2021** Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.). https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/theory-bioethics/
3. Nordenfelt L. The concepts of health and illness revisited. *Med. Health Care Philos*. **2007**, *10*, 5–10. DOI 10.1007/s11019-006-9017-3
4. Lekstutienė, J; Holm, S; Gefenas, E. Biobanks and individual health related findings: from an obstacle to an incentive. *Sci Eng Ethics* **2021**, *27(4)*, 1-16. DOI: 10.1007/s11948-021-00330-9. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11948-021-00330-9#citeas
5. Rigby, MJ. Ethical dimension of using artificial intelligence in health care. *AMA J Ethics* **2019**, 21(2), E121-124. doi: 10.1001/amajethics.2019.121. https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/ethical-dimensions-using-artificial-intelligence-health-care/2019-02
6. Lucivero, F; Jongsma KR. A mobile revolution for healthcare? Setting the agenda for bioethics. *J Med Ethics* **2018***, 44 (10)*, 685-689. https://jme.bmj.com/content/44/10/685.abstract
7. Wickremsinhe. Global mental health should engage with the ethics of involuntary admission. *Int J Ment Health Syst* **2021**, *15*, 20. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13033-021-00448-0 https://ijmhs.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13033-021-00448-0#citeas
8. Europos mokslinių tyrimų etikos vadovėlis. Europos Komisija, **2010**. https://www.smi.mf.vu.lt/application/files/2316/4975/0114/European_Textbook_on_Ethics_in_Research-Lithuanian.pdf
9. Encyclopedia of Global Bioethics, Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht, **2015**. https://link.springer.com/referencework/10.1007/978-3-319-05544-2
10. ten Have, HAMJ; ter Meulen, RHJ; van Leeuwen E. Medicinos etika. Vilnius: Charibdė, **2003**.
11. Van der Heide, A; van Delden, JJM; Onwuteaka-Philipsen, BD. End-of-life decisions in the Netherlands over 25 years. *N Engl J. Med* **2017**, *377*, 492-494. https://www.nejm.org/doi/10.1056/NEJMc1705630?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr_id=ori:rid:crossref.org&rfr_dat=cr_pub%20%200pubmed
12. Allyse M; Robinson D; Ferber M; Sharp R. Direct-to-Consumer Testing 2.0: Emerging Models of Direct-to-Consumer Genetic Testing. *Mayo Clin Proc* **2018**, *93(1)*,113-120. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mayocp.2017.11.001
13. Nuffield Council on Bioethics. Genome editing and human reproduction: social and ethical issues, **2018**. https://www.nuffieldbioethics.org/assets/pdfs/Genome-editing-and-human-reproduction-short-guide.pdf https://www.nuffieldbioethics.org/publications/genome-editing-and-human-reproduction
14. Dalal, AR. Philosophy on organ donation: review of ethical facets. *World J Transplant* **2015**, *5(2)*, 44-51. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4478599/
15. European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies. Ethics of genome editing. **2021**. https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research_and_innovation/ege/ege_ethics_of_genome_editing-opinion_publication.pdf

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APPROVED:
By Council of Doctoral School of Medicine and Health Sciences at Vilnius University 15th of June, 2022
Chairperson of the Board: Prof. Janina Tutkuvienė